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THE
Cassique of Accabee.

A
TALE OF ASHLEY RIVER.

WITH
OTHER PIECES.

BY
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AUTHOR OF "THE YEMASSEE," "RICHARD HURDIS,"
"GUY RIVERS," "ATALANTIS," ETC.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

A FEW words, by way of preface, will save us the necessity of burdening with notes the little story which follows. Accabee is the well known name of a lovely, but neglected, farmstead, in the neighborhood of Charleston, on Ashley River. It was in earlier periods applied to a larger district in the same neighborhood. Keawah is the aboriginal name of the Ashley. The tribe of Accabee were probably of the same family with the Yemassees, the Edistos, and other groups, inhabiting the lower country of South-Carolina. The Gaelic Chief spoken of in the text was Lord Cardross, who made a settlement at, or near, Beaufort, which, after a brief existence of four years, was destroyed by an incursion of the Indians and Spaniards. It does not appear that the noble Earl himself accompanied his colony, though this fact is clearly to be inferred from the language of the historian. These particulars are all that is necessary for a full understanding of the story which follows.

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THE CASSIQUE OF ACCABEE.

I.

It was a night of calm o'er Ashley's waters,
Crept the sweet billows to their own soft tune,
While she, most bright of Keawah's fair daughters,
Whose voice might spell the footsteps of the moon,
As slow we swept along,
Pour'd forth her own sweet song,
A lay of rapture not forgotten soon.

II.

Hush'd was our breathing, still'd the lifted oar,
Our spirits spell'd, our souls no longer free,
While the boat drifting softly to the shore,
Brought us within the shades of Accabee;—
"Ah!" sudden cried the maid,
In the dim light afraid;—
"Tis here the ghost still walks of the old Yemassee."

III.

And sure the spot was haunted by a power,
To fix the pulses in each youthful heart;
Never was moon more gracious in a bower,
Making delicious fancy work for art;
Weaving, so meekly bright,
Her pictures of delight,
That, though afraid to stay, we sorrow'd to depart.

IV.

"If these old groves are haunted"—sudden then,
Said she, our sweet companion—"it must be
By one who loved, and was beloved again,
And joy'd all forms of loveliness to see:—
Here, in these groves they went,
Where love and worship, blent,
Still framed the proper God for each idolatry.

V.

It could not be that love should here be stern,
Or beauty fail to sway with sov'ran might;
These, from so blessed scenes, should something learn,
And swell with tenderness and shape delight:
These groves have had their power,
And bliss, in bygone hour,
Hath charm'd, with sigh and song, the passage of the night."

VI.

It were a bliss to think so ;" made reply,
Our Hubert—"yet the tale is something old,
That checks us with denial ;—and our sky,
And these brown woods that, in its glittering fold,
Look like a fairy clime,
Still unsubdued by time,
Have evermore the tale of wrong'd devotion told."

VII.

"Give us thy legend, Hubert ;" cried the maid ;—
And, with down-dropping oars, our yielding prow,
Stole to a still lagune, where ample shade
Droop'd from the gray moss of an old oak's brow :
The groves, meanwhile, lay bright,
Like the broad stream, in light,
Delicious soft as e'er the lunar looms arrayed.

VIII.

"Great was the native chief,"—'twas thus began
The legend of our comrade—"who, in sway,
Held the sweet empire which to-night we scan,
Stretching, on either hand, for miles away :
A stalwart chief was he,
Cassique of Accabee,
And lord o'er numerous tribes who did with pride obey."

IX.

War was his passion, 'till the white man came,
And then his policy ;—and well he knew,
How, over all, to plan the desperate game,
And when to rise, and when to sink from view ;
 'To plant his ambush well,
 And how, with horrid yell,
To dart, at midnight forth, in fury arm'd with flame.

X.

His neighbours by the Ashley, the pale race,
Were friends and allies 'gainst all other foes ;
They dwelt too nearly to his royal place,
 To make the objects of their commerce blows ;
 But no such scruple staid
 His wild and cruel raid,
When, by Helena's Bay, the Gaelic hamlet rose.

XI.

And moved by Spanish wile that still misled,
Our chieftain, in one dark November night,
With all his warriors, darted from his bed,
And drove the Gaelic chief from his, in fright :—
 Scalplocks and other spoils,
 Rewarded well his toils,
And captives graced his triumph after fight.

XII.

But, when the strife was wildest, and the fire
Play'd fiercest on the roof of bough and leaf,
A fair hair'd child, misdeeming him her sire,
Rush'd headlong to the arms of the red chief:—
 'Twas not his hour to spare—
 His fingers in her hair,
And tomahawk, lifted high, declar'd her respite brief.

XIII.

But in the light of her own blazing home,
He caught the entreaty in her soft blue eye,
Which, weeping still the while, would wildly roam,
From him who held, to those who hurried by;—
 Strange was the emotion then,
 That bade him stay his men,
And, in his muscular arms, lift that young damsel high.

XIV.

He bore her through the forest, many a mile,
With a rude tenderness and matchless strength;
She slept upon his arm—she saw his smile,
Seen seldom, and reached Accabee at length;
 Here, secret for a year,
 He kept the child with care,
And love, that did from her a seeming love beguile.

XV.

A child of ancient Albyn, she was bright,
With a transparent beauty ; on her cheek,
The rose and lily, struggling to unite,
Did the best blooms of either flow'r bespeak ;
 Whilst floods of silken hair,
 Free flowing, did declare,
The gold of sunset realms, ere Phoebus sinks from sight.

XVI.

Our chief had reach'd his thirtieth summer—she
Was but thirteen ; yet, 'till he saw this maid,
Love made no portion of his reverie :
Strife was his passion, and the midnight raid ;
 The dusky maids, in vain,
 Had sought to weave their chain,
About that fierce wild heart that still from all went free.

XVII.

But, free no longer, they beheld him bound
By his fair captive : strife was now unsought,
For a long season ; and his warriors found
Their chief no more where fields were to be fought ;—
 He better loved to brood
 In this sweet solitude,
She still in sight, who thus, her captor's self had caught.

XVIII.

She little knew her conquest, for he still
Maintain'd her as his child, with tenderness ;—
As one who seeks no farther of his will,
Than to protect and with sweet nurture bless ;
Such love as sire might show,
Did that dark chief bestow,
When, with a gentle clasp, he met her child-caress.

XIX.

She grew to be the blossom of his sight—
For her he snared the fawn,—for her he brought
Gay gauds of foreign fabric ;—her delight
Being still the sweetest recompense he sought ;—
And, when her feet would rove,
He led her through the grove,
Show'd her its devious paths and all its secrets taught.

XX.

She grew apace in beauty as in years,
And he the more devoted :—until now,
His eye beheld her growth and had no fears,—
But soon a shadow rose above his brow ;—
That shadow, born of doubt,
Which finds love's secret out,
And, o'er its sunniest bower, still spans an arch of tears.

XXI.

This shadow had its birth with our dark chief,
When, to his home, one eve, returning late,
He saw, with passion still subdued by grief,
A stranger with his beauty, in his gate ;—
One of the pale white race,
Whose presence, in that place,
Brought to his heart a fear that troubled it like fate.

XXII.

Yet was he but a pedlar,—he who came,—
Thus troubling waters which had slept before ;
He brought his glittering wares, and did but claim
To show them, and night's lodging to implore :
And, o'er his pack, with eyes
Of eager, glad surprize,
Stoop'd our young maid when stept the chief within his door.

XXIII.

His stealthy footsteps stirr'd no single sound ;
They knew not of the eyes upon them set—
She, the gay thoughtless girl, in thought profound,
Deep in such wealth as had not tempted yet ;
While his—the stranger's—gaze,
In a most pleasant maze,
Scann'd her bright cheeks, unseen, from eyes of glittering jet.

XXIV.

A handsome youth, of dark and amorous glance,
Showing a grateful consciousness of power,
Yet, all forgetful, in his first sweet trance,
How best to make it sway that forest flower ;
Even at that moment, stood,
The red-man from the wood,
With pang at heart as if 'twere cleft by foeman's lance.

XXV.

Quickly he broke the silence and came forth,
While the fair girl, upstarting from her dream,
Hurried his search into such stores of worth,
As did on eyes of young Aladdin gleam :—
Clipping his neck with arms,
That spoke of dearer charms,
The maid Othello loved might she that moment seem.

XXVI.

And, with a pleased, but still a sinking heart,
He yielded to her pleading : he had store,
Such treasure as the Indian might impart,
That had its value on a foreign shore ;
Spoils in the forest sought,
By tribute hunter brought,
Soft furs from beaver won by snares of sylvan art.

XXVII.

Sadly, the indulgent chief—but with a smile,—
Gave up his treasure at his ward's demand ;
The precious gauds which did her eyes beguile,
Soon clasp'd her neck, or glitter'd in her hand.
All had she won—but still,
There was a feminine will,
That led her glance astray beneath that stranger's wile.

XXVIII.

Their eyes commerced beside the blazing fire,
Hers still unconscious of the erring vein ;
The chief beheld, in his, the keen desire,
And his heart swell'd with still increasing pain ;
Yet, though the sting was deep,
His passion, made to sleep,
Look'd calm through eyes that seem'd a stranger still to ire.

XXIX.

His board was spread with hospitable hand,
Crisp'd the brown bread and smoked the venison steak ;
An ancient squaw, still ready at command,
Pour'd the casina tea, their thirst to slake ;
Then, as the hour grew late,
With calm and lofty state,
With skins, the chief, himself, the stranger's couch did make.

XXX.

At sunrise they partook the morning meal,
And then the white-man went upon his way ;
Not without feeling—teaching her to feel—
How sweet to both had been his still delay :—
The nature, long at rest,
Rose, pleading, at her breast,
For that pale race from which, perforce, she went astray.

XXXI.

She long'd for their communion,—for the youth
Had waken'd memories, not to be subdued,
Of that dear home, and friends whose tender ruth,
Possess'd her still in that sweet solitude ;
And, saddening with the thought,
Her secret soul grew fraught [to brood.
With hopes, with doubts, with dreams, o'er which she loved

XXXII.

The chief beheld the trouble in her eye,
He felt as well the trouble in his heart,
And, ere the morrow's sun was in the sky,
He bade her make her ready to depart ;—
He had a wider home,
Where love might safely roam,
Nor fear the stranger's foot, nor tremble at his art.

XXXIII.

Cassique among the Edisto's, he bore
His treasure to the river of that name ;
He sought the forests on its western shore,
Millions of acres he alone might claim ;
Where the great stream divides,
He crossed its double tides,
Still seeking denser empires to explore.

XXIV.

At length, he paused beside a little lake,
A clear sweet mirror for the midnight star ;
"Soon, weary one, thy slumbers shalt thou take ;
In sooth, to-day, our feet have wandered far ;
Yet look, and thou shalt see,
The wigwam smokes for thee,— [are.
'Those fires that gleam through woods show where our people

XXXV.

Here shalt thou have fond service—here the clime
Is sweet and healthful ;—buskin'd, with thy bow,
Thou'lt wander forth with me, at morning's chime,
And I to snare or slay the game, will show :
Broad are the sheltering woods,
Bright are the streams, the floods,
And safe the realm that hence thy youthful heart shall know."

XXXVI.

Thus counselling, he led her o'er the plain,
Down the smooth hill, beside the lakelet clear;
They tread the gloomy forest paths again,
'Till sudden, the whole landscape opens fair;
"Look ! weary one," he cries ;
" Our realm before us lies,
Far spread as bird can fly, or speeds by day the deer."

XXXVII.

In sooth, to one whose heart is all at rest,
With not a human care to call it thence,
It was a scene that rapture might have bless'd,
Lovely to sight and dear to innocence ;
Great trees, a welcome shade,
Of beach and poplar made,
Fortress of peace that love might deem his best defence.

XXXVIII.

Long groves of pine and cedar led through wastes
Made lovely by wild flow'rs of every hue ;
Through arching boughs and vines the river hastes,
Still with the song of birds that wander too ;
A fresh green realm, unbroke
By plough, or woodman's stroke,
Rich in savannahs green, and lakes of skylike blue.

XXXIX.

His was the realm, and at his bidding came
The tribes that peopled it; beneath his sway
They framed their rude society;—his blame,
Or praise, sufficient guide to shape their way;
Still, with the falling leaf,
The signal of our chief
Prepared them for the chase and counselled their array.

XL.

And thus, for many a moon, within that shade,
Dwelling 'mongst vassals rude but loyal still,
Remote, but not in loneliness, our maid,
Had all that love could sigh for, but its will;
Submissive still she found,
The gentle tribes around,
The squaws received her law, the warriors too obey'd.

XLI.

No censure check'd her walks—no evil eyes,
Darken'd upon her childish sports at eve;
If o'er the chieftain's brow a trouble lies,
'Tis sure no fault of her's that makes him grieve;
For her he still hath smiles,
And, in her playful wiles,
He finds a charm that still must artlessly deceive.

XLI.

Her wild song cheers him at the twilight hour,
As, on the sward, beside her sylvan cot,
He throws him down, the image of a power,
Subdued by beauty to the vassal's lot ;
With half unconscious gaze,
His eye her form surveys,
And fancies fill his heart which utterance yet have not.

XLIII.

She had expanded into womanhood,
In those brief years of mild captivity,
And now, as 'neath his glance the damsel stood,
Nothing more sweet had ever met his eye ;—
Fair, with her Saxon face,
Her form, a forest grace
Had won from woodland sports of rare agility.

XLIV.

Her rich blue eyes, her streaming yellow hair,
The soft white skin that show'd the crimson tide—
The perfect features—framed a beauty rare,
That well the charms of Indian race defied ;—
Her motion, as of flight,
Tutor'd by wild delight,
Brought to her form a grace at once of love and pride.

XLV.

And, as he gazed, with rapture ill suppress'd,
Inly, the chief resolved that she should be,
The woman he would take unto his breast,
Ere the next moon should ride up from the sea ;
His child no more,—he felt
His soul within him melt,
To hear her voice in song, her thought in fancy free.

XLVI.

She felt at last her power upon his heart,
As she beheld the language in his eye ;
And, with this knowledge, came a natural art,
Which bade her glances unto his reply ;
Made happy by her look
His soul new poison took,
He drew her to his breast, nor seem'd she to deny.

XLVII.

"I shall go hence," quoth he, " the Hunter's Moon,
'These sticks shall tell thee of the broken days ;
When all are gone, I shall return,—and soon,
The beauties that I hold within my gaze,
Shall bless, if thou approve,
This heart, and the fond love,
That knows thee as the star the ocean stream that sways."

XLVIII.

And she was silent while he spake—her head
Sunk, not in sadness, and upon his breast ;
Fondly he kiss'd her—other words he said,
And still, in dear embrace, her form caress'd ;
Then parting, sped afar,
Led by the Hunter's Star,
Where the Bear wallows in his summer nest.

XLIX.

She had no sorrow to obey the will
That ruled a nation : true, he slew her sire,
But he had been a gentle guardian still,
Baffling each danger, soothing each desire ;
The power that he possess'd
Was grateful to her breast,
And warm'd with pride the heart, that lack'd each holier fire.

L.

That night there rose an image in her dreams,
Of the young trader seen at Accabee ;
His fair soft face upon her memory gleams,
His keen, dark, searching eye, still wantonly,
Pursues her with its blaze ;
And she returns the gaze,
And thus her heart communes with one she cannot see.

L I.

It was as if the chief, by the same word
That told his own fond purpose, had compell'd
The image of the person she preferr'd,—
And, seeing him in dreams, her soul was spell'd
With fancies that, in vain,
She strove to hush again—
She saw their shapes by day, by night their voices heard.

L II.

Saddened by this communion, she withdrew
From those who sought her; in deep forests went,
By lonely streams and shades, from human view,
Nursing a vague and vexing discontent;—
For the first time, a care
Hung on her heart like fear,
The shadows from a soul not wholly innocent.

L III.

There is a fate beside us day and night,
Obedient to the voice within our hearts;
Boldly we summon, and it stands in sight;
We speak not, and in silence it departs;—
'Twas thus with her, as still,
She roved with aimless will,
Beside the swamps through which the Edisto still darts.

LIV.

- She spoke aloud, or did not speak, his name,
Whose image was the sole one in her breast;
But, suddenly, from out the woods he came,
And mutual glances mutual joy express'd:—
“Ah, sought so long in vain,
I fear'd that, ne'er again,
Mine eyes should see the form that kept my soul from rest.

LV.

How have I search'd for you in devious path,
Forgetful of the mercenary trade;
And now, though perill'd by the redman's wrath,
I seek you in forbidden forest shade;
For never, since that night,
When first I met thy sight,
Hath beauty on my heart such sweet impression made.”

LVI.

They sat beneath the shade of silent trees,
Close guarded by a thicket dense and deep;
There, onward, stole the river at its ease,
And, through the air, the birds made easy sweep;—
Those bow'rs were sweetly dight,
For safety and delight;—
The stranger won the prize the chieftain fain would keep.

LVII.

He came, the dark-brow'd chieftain, from the chase,
Laden with precious spoils of forest pride;
His heart exulting as he near'd the place,
Where the fair Saxon waited as his bride:
But who shall speak the grief
That shook that warrior chief,
When they declared her flight with yester-eventide.

LVIII.

He had no voice for anguish or regret;—
He spake not of his purpose—but went forth,
With a keen spirit, on one progress set,
Now on the southern stream side, now the north;
Following, with sleuthhound's scent,
The way the lovers went,
Tracking each footfall sure, in leaf, in grass and earth.

LIX.

Nor did he track in vain! They little knew
The unerring instinct of that hunter race;
A devious progress did the twain pursue,
Through streams and woods, to baffle still the trace;
But how should they beguile,
The master of each wile,
Each art pursued in war or needful in the chase?

LX.

In fancy safe, and weary now with flight,
The lovers lay at noonday in the shade;
Soft through the leaves and grateful to the sight,
The sun in droplets o'er the valley play'd;
But two short leagues, and they
Should leave the perilous way,
On Keawah secure, in home by squatter made.

LXI.

Thus satisfied, with seeming certainty,
Won by the hour's sweet stillness, did the pair,
Shelter'd beneath the brows of an old tree,
Give freedom to the love they joy'd to share;
His arm about her press'd,
She lay upon his breast,
Life's self forgot in bliss that left no room for fear.

LXII.

They little dream'd that, lurking in the wood,
A witness to the freedom of their bliss,
The fiery chieftain they had baffled, stood,
Fierce, with evenom'd fang and fatal hiss;
The lord of death and life,
He grasp'd the deadly knife,
And shook the tomahawk high but rarely known to miss.

LXIII.

But, ere he sped the weapon to its mark,
His heart grew gentle 'neath a milder sway;
True, they had left his dwelling lone and dark,
But should he make it glad were he to slay?
Nor, if the man he slew,
Could he again renew
The trust he gave the maid as in his happier day.

LXIV.

Nor could he strike, with stern and fatal blow,
Her whose fair beauties were too precious still;
A noble purpose came to soothe his wo,
And crown, with best revenge, a generous will;—
Forth strode he from the wood,
And, ere they knew, he stood,
With weapon bared, and look still resolute to kill.

LXV.

As one who at the serpent's rattle starts,
Sharp, sudden sounded in the covert nigh,
They heard his voice, and both their guilty hearts
Sunk, hopeless, 'neath the expected penalty;
But, stifling his deep grief,
With few brief words, the chief,
Declared, though worthy death, the guilty should not die!

LXVI.

O'erjoy'd at respite scarcely yet believed,
The girl had risen and rush'd to clasp his knees,
But he whose passions had been once deceived,
No homage now could pacify or please;
Soft, but with gloomy face,
He checks the false embrace,
And still, the crouching youth, with scornful eye, he sees.

LXVII.

He bade them rise and follow where he led,
Himself conducted to the dwelling near;
Here, till the dawn, each found a separate bed,
With morning o'er the Keawah they steer;
Still guided he the way,
And, ere the close of day,
Once more the three to shades of Accabee repair.

LXVIII.

"Here," said he, "is your future dwelling place,
This be, my gift, your heritage of right;
The holy man, of your own foreign race,
Shall, with the coming day, your hands unite;
And men of law shall know
That I these lands forego,
For her who still hath been the apple of my sight."

LXXX.

See that you cherish her with proper faith ;—
If that you wrong her, look for wrong from me ;
Once have I spared you when the doom was death ;
Beware the future wrath you may not flee ;
Mine eye shall watch for her's,
And if a breath but stirs
Her hair too rudely,—look for storms on Accabee.

LXX.

He did as he had promised ; they were wed
By Christian rites,—and legal deeds convey'd
The heritage ;—without a word then sped
The chief into his forests, seeking shade :
Months pass'd—a year went by,
And none beheld his eye, [stray'd.
Where still his thought, with love, through these sweet places

LXXI.

He grew to be forgotten by the twain,—
Or if not wholly by the woman,—she
Ne'er spoke of him,—ne'er look'd for him again,
Though much it might have gladden'd her to see ;
For love had lost its flow'r,
And soon there came an hour,
When pain usurp'd the place where joy was wont to be.

LXXII.

The first sweet flush of summer dalliance gone,
The first most precious bloom of passion o'er,
Indifference follow'd in the heart that won,
And scorn found home where rapture rose no more ;
No kindly nurture bless'd,
Where love no more was guest,
And soon the peace had fled that charm'd the shrine of yore.

LXXIII.

And scorn grew into hate, and hate to wrath,
And wrath found speech in violence ;—his arm
Smote the unhappy woman in her path ;—
Submission could not soothe, nor tears disarm,
The fury of that breast,
Which cruel hate possess'd,
And which her beauty now no more sufficed to charm.

LXXIV.

The profligate husband, reckless of her wo,
Her meek submission and her misery,
Prepared, in secret, still another blow,
And bargained for the sale of Accabee ;
Already had he drawn
The fatal deed—had gone,
Resolved, in other lands, no more his wife to see.

LXXV.

He little knew that eyes were on his flight,
That long had marked his deeds ;—his way led through
The umbrageous groves of Eutaw :—long ere night
His footsteps to the white-man's clearings drew ;—
And, with the exulting thought
Of wealth so basely sought,
He saw the cottage smokes, of him who bought, in view.

LXXVI.

But now a voice arrests him as he goes—
Forth starts the red chief from the covering wood ;
At once he knew him for the worst of foes ;
Guilt quell'd his courage, terror-froze his blood ;
The horse is stay'd—in vain,
He jerks the extended rein,
Vainly applies the spur, and show'rs his flanks with blows.

LXXVII.

Stern was the summons—in a single word—
“Down !”—and he yielded to the vigorous hand ;
I gave thee all !” were then the accents heard—
“The woman from my bosom, and my land ;—
“I warn'd thee, ere I went,
Of wrath and punishment,
If hair upon her head, in wrath was ever stirr'd.

LXXVIII.

"I know thee, and thy doings . . . thou shalt die!"
"Mercy !" implored the profligate in vain ;
Vainly he struggled—vainly sought to fly—
Even as he strives the hatchet cleaves his brain ;
 Quivering, he lay beneath,
 While, from his leathern sheath,
The warrior drew the knife and coldly scalp'd his slain.

LXXIX.

Another night, and on the Accabee :—
Softly the moon was smiling on its grove ;
Sadly the woman watch'd its light, for she
 No longer felt with hope, or glow'd with love ;
 Grief, and a dark despair,
 Dwelt in the bosom, where,
Expell'd by brutal wrath, love soon was doomed to flee.

LXXX.

She couch'd beside her hearth in dreamy care,
Silence and wo close crouching at each hand ;
Life without promise, fill'd with many a fear ;—
With vacant eye she saw the flickering brand,
 Nor strove, the sinking blaze
 That hardly moved her gaze,
Declining, with fresh fuel to repair.

LXXXI.

But lo ! another hand beside her own,
Bends to the task ;—sudden, the resinous pine
Flames up ;—she feels she is no more alone ;
She sees a well-known eye upon her shine ;
And hides her face, and cries—
“ The Chief ! ” his silent eyes
Still saddening o’er the form too long and dearly known.

LXXXII.

“ The man whom thou did’st wed, will never more
Lay angry hand upon thee—he had sold
Thy land, and fled thee for another shore,
But that I wrapp’d him in the serpent’s fold ;
And took from him the pow’r
That had usurp’d thy dow’r,—
In proof of what I tell thee,—lo ! behold ! ”

LXXXIII.

Thus speaking, he, beside her, on the floor,
Cast down the white-man’s written instrument ;
Sign’d, seal’d and witness’d ; conn’d with legal lore ;
Conveying, such the document’s intent,
All these fair groves and plains,
The Accabee domains
To one, of kindred race, whose name the paper bore.

LXXXIV.

And she had sign'd it with unwilling hand,
• Ignorant of its meaning, but in dread ;
Obedient to her tyrant's fierce command,
While his hand shook in threat'ning o'er her head ;
'Twas in that very hour,
His blow, with brutal power,
Had stricken her to the earth where long she lay as dead.

LXXXV.

He little dream'd that the avenger near,
Beheld him and prepared his punishment ;
You ask why came he not to interfere,
And stay, ere yet was wrought the foul intent ;
Enough, the red-man knows
His time to interpose :—
Sternly his hour he takes with resolute will unbent.

LXXXVI.

Unerring, we have seen him in pursuit—
Unsparring, we have seen him in his blow ;—
His mission was not ended—and, though mute,
He stood, surveying her who, cowering low,
Crept humbly to his feet,
As seeming to entreat,—
He had another task which found the warrior slow.

LXXXVII.

But he was firm :—"This paper is your own,—
Another proof is mine, that you will be
Safe from the blows of him so lately known ;
He hath his separate lands henceforth from me—
Ample the soil I gave,
Beside the Eutaw's wave,—
In token of my truth—this bloody scalplock see."

LXXXVIII.

Then shriek'd the unhappy woman with affright,
Revolting at the trophy, dripping yet,
That, down upon the paper, in her sight,
With quiet hand, the haughty chieftain set ;
"Spare me !" she cried—"Oh ! spare !"
And crouching, still in fear,
Backward she sped as if she safety sought in flight.

LXXXIX.

"Fear nothing !" said the Chieftain ; "'twas for thee,
I brought this bloody token of my truth,
To show thee that, henceforward, thou art free
To the possession of thy life and youth ;
Still hast thou beauty—still
Thy heritage—thy will ;
Go, seek thy kindred pale, secure of love and ruth.

XC.

"From him, who, in thy thoughtlessness of heart,
Thou mad'st a master over thee, I save;
I slew thy father—I have done his part,
And give thee wealth more ample than he gave;
Henceforth, thou wilt not see,
The chief at Accabee;
Beware again lest passion make thee slave.

XCI.

"I leave thee now forever!" "No!" she cried:
"Oh! take me to thy people;—let me dwell
Lone, peaceful, on the Edisto's green side,
Which had I left not I had still been well:—
Forgive me that the child,
With heart both weak and wild,
Err'd in not loving where she might have loved with pride!"

XCII..

"I had believed thee once, but now too late!—
Henceforth, I know thee only to forget."
"Thou can'st not!"—"It may be that thus my fate
Hath spoken,—but my resolute will is set,
In manhood,—and I know,
Though all of life be wo,
Thus better—than with faithlessness to mate."

XCIII.

She crouch'd beneath his feet, incapable
Of answer to that speech ; and his sad look,
As if his eyes acknowledged still a spell,
One long, deep survey of the woman took ;—
She still unseeing aught,
Of that sad, searching thought,
Which, speaking through his eye, her soul could never brook.

XCIV.

Sudden as spectre, waving wide his hand,
He parted from her presence :—He was gone,
Into the shadows of that forest land,—
And, desolate now, the woman lay alone,—
Crouching beside the hearth,
Whilst thousand fears had birth
Haunting her thought with griefs more fearful than the known.

XCV.

Our story here is ended. Of her fate
Nothing remains to us, but that she sold,
Of Accabee, the beautiful estate,
And sought her shelter in the city's fold ;
The purchaser, meanwhile,
Made the dark forest smile,
And crown'd its walks with works most lovely to behold.

XCVI.

A noble dwelling rose amid'st the trees,
Fair statues crown'd the vistas—pathways broke
The umbrageous shadows,—and sweet melodies,
Among the groves, at noon and morning woke;—
And great reserves of game,
In which the wild grew tame;—
And pleasant lakes, by art, were scoop'd for fisheries.

XCVII.

Here pleasure strove to make her own abode;
She left no mood uncherish'd which might cheer;
Through the grim forests she threw wide the road,
And welcom'd Beauty, while expelling care:
Wealth spared no toils to bless,
And still, with due caress,
Honor'd the daily groups that sought for pastime there.

XCVIII.

But still the spot was haunted by a grief;—
Joy ever sank in sadness:—guests depart;
A something sorrowful, beyond belief,
Impairs the charms of music and of art:
'Till sadly went each grace,
And, as you see the place,
Gradual the ruin grew, a grief to eye and heart.

XCIX.

The native genius, born in solitude,
Was still a thing of sorrow; and his spell,
Whatever be the graft of foreign mood,
Still made the ancient influence with it dwell;
Still reigns its gloomy lord,
With all his sway restored,
Lone, o'er his barren sceptre doom'd to brood."

C.

Slow sped our skiff into the open light,—
The billows bright before us,—but no more
Rose love's sweet ditty on our ears that night;—
Silent the maid look'd back upon the shore,
And thought of those dark groves,
And that wild chieftain's loves,
As they had been a truth her heart had known of yore.

POEMS.



POEMS.

FLIGHT TO NATURE.

SICK of the crowd, the toil, the strife,
Sweet nature, how I turn to thee,
Seeking for renovated life,
By brawling brook and shady tree.

I knew thy rocks had spells of old,
To soothe the wanderer's wo to calm,
And, in thy waters, clear and cold,
My fev'rish brow would seek for balm.

I've bent beneath thy ancient oak,
And sought for slumber in its shade,
And, as the clouds above me broke,
I dream'd to find the boon I pray'd ;

For light—a blessed light—was given,
Wide streaming round me from above,
And in the deep, deep vaults of heaven,
There shone, methought, a look of love,

And, through the long, long summer hours,
When every bird had won its wing,
How sweet to think, amidst thy flow'rs,
That youth might yet renew its spring;—

That sacred season of the heart,
When every pulse with hope was strong,
And, still untaught by selfish art,
Truth fear'd no guile, and love no wrong.

And who, but nature's self, could yield
The blessing in the pray'r I made,
Throned in her realm of wood and field,
Of rocky realm and haunted shade?·

Who, but that magic queen, whose sway
Drives winter from his path of strife,
Whilst all her thousand fingers play,
With bud and bird, in games of life!

With these a kindred life I ask,—
Not wealth that mortals vainly seek;
But, in heaven's sunshine let me bask,
My heart as glowing as my cheek;—

An idle heart, that would not heed
That chiding voice, when duty comes,
To drag the soul, all fresh and freed,
Back to cold toils and weary glooms.

No lure she finds in mortal schemes,
Which wiser fancies still reprove,—
Far happier in her woodland dreams,
With one sweet teacher, taught by love!

Thou, nature, that magician be,
Restore each dream that taught the boy,
That warm'd his hope, that made him free,
While wisdom took the shape of joy;

And I will bless thee with a song,
As fond as hers, that idle bird,
That sings above me all day long,
As if she knew I watch'd and heard.



THE BROOKLET.

A LITTLE farther on there is a brook,
Where the breeze loiters ever. The great oaks,
Have roof'd it with their arms and affluent leaves,
So that the sunbeam rifles not its fount,
While the shade cools it. You may hear it now,
A low faint murmur, as, through pebbly paths,
In soft and sinuous progress, it flows on,
In streams that make division as they go,

Still parting, still uniting, in one song,
The sweetest mortals know, of constancy.

Thither, ah, thither, if thy heart be sad !—
That song will bring thee solace. Or, if hope
That may not yet find name for what it seeks,
Inspires thee with a dream whose essence brings
Fruition in its keeping,—still, the strain
That's murmur'd by yon brooklet, is the best,—
Having a voice for fancy at its birth,
That keeps it wakeful on its own sweet wings.
And thou wilt gather, for whatever mood
That keeps thee fond or thoughtful, a sweet tone
Beguiling thy best sympathies, and still,
Leaving in thy keeping, as thou seek'st thy home,
A kindlier sense of what is in thy path.

Beside these banks, through the whole livelong day,
Ere yet I noted much the flight of time,
And knew him but in ballad books and songs,
Nor cared to know him better,—I have lain,
Nursing delicious reveries that made
All being but a circle of bright flow'rs,
With love the centre, sov'ran of that realm,
And I a happy inmate with the rest.
There, with sweet thoughts, all liquid like the stream
That still inspired their progress, clear and bright,

I lay as one who slept, through happy hours,
Unvex'd by din of duty, unrebuked
By chiding counsellor to youthful cares,
That ever seeks to plant on boyish brow,
'The winter that has silver'd all its own.
And thus, in long delight, with the wrapt soul,
Making its own elysium of the peace
That harbor'd in the solitude, the eye,
Grew momentarily familiar with sweet forms,
That offer'd to the genius of the place,
Making all consecrate to gentleness.
How came the thrush to whistle as he drank,
Heeding not me, and darting through the copse,
Only to bring his loved one on his wing,
To gather like refreshment; squirrels dropt
Their nuts adown the bankside where I lay,
And leaping to recover them, ere yet,
They rolled into the brooklet and away,
Swept over me, and with fantastic play,
Drew up their feathery brush above their heads,
And their gray orbs, with bright intelligence,
Cast round them, while from hand to hand, they frisk'd
The prize which none might covet but to feed,
Such nimble harlequins. The dove at noon
Couch'd in thick bristly covering of the pine,
Sought here its sweet siesta, wooing sleep,
By plaintive iteration of sad notes,

That might be still a sensible happiness :—
And sometimes, meek intruder on my realm,
Through yonder thick emerging, half in light
And half in shadow, stole the timid fawn,
That came down to the basin's edge to drink,
Now lapping, and now turning to the bank,
Cropping the young blade of the coming spring,
And heedless; as I lay along unstirr'd,
Of any stranger—sauntering through the shade,
Even where I crouch'd,—having a quiet mood,
And not disturbing, while surveying mine.

Thou smil'st—and on thy lip the speaking thought
Looks still like censure—deems my hours mis-spent,
And saddens into warning. A shrewd thought,
I will not combat with an argument,
But leave the worldly policy to boast,
That such an errantry as this life of mine,
Hath found its fit sarcasm, well rebuked.
And yet there is a something in the life
'Thou mock'st, as idle still and profligate,
Something to life compensative, and dear
To feelings that are fashion'd not by man.
Ah ! the delicious sadness of the hours,
Spent by this brooklet—ah ! the dreams they brought,
Of other hopes and beings—the sweet truths,
That still subdued the heart to patientness,

And made all flexible in the youthful will,
That else had been most passionate and rash.
I know the toils that gather on my path,
And I will grapple them with a strength that shows
A love for the encounter, not the less
For hours thus wasted in the solitude,
And fancies born of dreams—and 'twill not less
Impair the resolute courage of my heart,
Wrestling with toil, in conflicts of the race,
If still, in pauses of the fight, I dream
Of this dear idlesse,—gazing on that brook
So sweet in shade, thus singing on its way,
Like some dear child, all thoughtless, as it goes
From shadow into sunlight and is lost.



TO TIME.

GRAY monarch of the waste of years,
Mine eyes have told thy steps in tears,
Yet yield I not to feeble fears,
In watching now thy flight:
The pangs that followed still thy blow,
Have lost their edge with frequent wo,
And stronger must the courage grow,
That's fed by constant fight.

The neck long used to weighty yoke,
The tree once shivered by the stroke,
The heart by frequent torture broke—
These fear no later blight.

Oh ! mine has been a mournful song,—
My neck has felt the burden long,—
My tree was shiver'd,—weak and strong,
Beneath the bolt went down !—
The Fate that thus took early sway,
Has spared of mine but little prey,
For old and young were torn away,
Ere manhood's wing had flown ;—
I saw the noble sire, who stood
Majestic, as in crowded wood,
The pine—and after him, the brood
All perish in thy frown.

So count my hopes—so, tell my fears,
And, ask what now this life endears,
To him who gave, with many tears,
Each blossom of his love ;
Whose store in heaven, so precious grown,
He counts each earthly moment flown,
As loss of something from his own,
In treasures shrined above.
Denied to seek—to see,—his store,

Yet daily adding more and more,
Some precious plant, that, left before,
 The spoiler rends at last.
Not hard the task to number now
The few that live to feel the blow ;
The perished,—count them on my brow,
 With white hairs overcast.

White hairs—while yet each limb is strong,
To help the right, and crush the wrong—
Ere youth, in manhood's struggling throng,
 Had yet begun his way ;
Thought premature, that still denied
The boy's exulting sports—the pride,
That, with the blood's unconscious tide,
 Knows but to shout and play ;
Youth, that in love's first gush was taught
To see his best affection brought
 To tears, and wo, and death,—
While yet the fire was in his eye,
That told of passion's victory,
And, in his ear, the first sweet sigh,
 From beauty's laboring breath.

And manhood now,—and loneliness,—
With, oh ! how few to love and bless,
Save those who, in their dear duresse,

Look down from heaven's high towers ;
The stately sire, the gentle dame,
The maid who first awoke the flame,
That gave to both a mutual claim,
 Soon forfeited, as ours—
And all those dearest buds of bloom,
That simply sought on earth a tomb,
From birth to death, with rapid doom,
 A bird-flight wing'd for fate :
How thick the shafts !—how sure the aim !—
What other passion would'st thou tame,
Oh ! Time, within this heart of flame,
 Elastic, not elate ?

Is't pride ?—methinks 'tis joy to bend ;—
My foe—he can no more offend ;—
My friend is false ;—I love my friend ;—
 I love my foeman too !—

'Tis man I love ;—nor him alone,
The brute, the bird,—its joy or moan,
Not heedless, to my heart hath gone—

 I feel with all I view.
Would'st have me worthy ?—make me so,
By frequent bruize and overthrow ;—
But spare on other hearts the blow,
Spare, from the cruel pang, the wo,
 My innocent—my bright !

On me thy vengeance ! 'Tis *my* crime
That needs the scourge, and, in my prime,
'Twere fruitful of improving time,
Thy hands should not be light.

I bend me willing to the thrall,
Whate'er the doom, will bear it all,—
Drink of the bitter cup of gall,
Nor once complain of thee ;
Will poverty avail to chide,
Or sickness bend the soul of pride,
Or social scorn, still evil eyed ?—

Have, then, thy will of me !
But spare the woman and the child !—
Let me not see their features mild,
Distorted,—hear their accents wild,

In agonizing pain—
Too much of this !—I thought me sure,
In frequent pang and loss before ;—
I still have something to endure,—
And tremble, and—refrain !

On every shore they watch thy wing,—
To some the winter, some the spring,
Thou bring'st, or yet art doom'd to bring,

In rapid-rolling years :
How many seek thee, smiling now,

Who soon shall look with clouded brow,
Heart filled with bitter doubt and wo,
And eyes with gathering tears !—
But late, they fancied,—life's parade
Still moving on,—that, not a shade
Thou flung'st on bower and sunny glade,
In which they took delight :—
Sharp satirist—methinks I see
Thy glance in sternest mockery ;—
They little think, not seeing thee,
How fatal is thy flight ;—
What feathers grow beneath thy wing,
What darts—how poisoned—from what spring
Of darkness, and how keen the sting,—
How cureless still the blight.

Enough !—the cry has had its way,
As thou hast had—'tis not the lay
Of vain complaint,—no idle play
Of fancy-dreaming care :
A mocking bitter like thine own,
Wells up from fountains, deep and lone,
Where sorrow, by sepulchral stone,
Sits watching thy career.
Thou'st mock'd my hope and dash'd my joy,
With keen rebuke and cold alloy—
The father, son—the man, the boy,

All, all ! have felt the rod :—
Perchance, not all thy work in vain,
In softening soul, subduing brain,
If, suffering, I submit to pain,—
That minister of God.

THE TRAVELLER'S REST.

For hours we wandered o'er the beaten track,
A dreary stretch of sand, that, in the blaze
Of noon day, seem'd to launch sharp arrows back,
As fiery as the sun's. Our weary steeds,
Falter'd, with drooping heads, along the plain,
Looking from side to side, most wistfully,
For shade and water. We could feel for them,
Having like thirst ; and, in a desperate mood,
Gloomy with toil, and parching with the heat,
I had thrown down my burden by the way,
And slept, as man may never sleep but once,
Yielding without a sigh,—so utterly
Had the strong will, beneath the oppressive care,
Failed of the needed energy for life,—
When, with a smile, the traveller by my side,—
A veteran of the forest and true friend,

Whose memory I recal with many a tear,
Laid his rough hand most gently on mine own,
And said, in accents still encouraging :—

“Faint not,—a little farther we shall rest,
And find sufficient succour from repose,
For other travel : vigour will come back,
And sweet forgetfulness of all annoy,
With a siesta in the noontide hour,
Shelter'd by ample oaks. A little while,
Will bring us to the sweetest spot in the woods,
Named aptly, “Traveller's Rest.” There, we shall drink,
Of the pure fountain, and beneath the shade
Of trees, that murmur lessons of content,
To streams impatient as they glide from sight,
Forget the long day's weariness, o'er stoppes
Of burning sand, with thirst that looks in vain
For the cool brooklet. All these paths I know
From frequent travail, when my pulse, like yours,
Beat with an ardor soon discomfited,
Unseason'd by endurance. 'Through a course
Of toil, I now can think upon with smiles,
Which brought but terror when I felt it first,
I grew profound in knowledge of the route,
Marking each wayside rock, each hill of clay,
Blazed shaft, or blighted thick, and forked tree,
With confidence familiar as you found

In bookish lore and company. Cheer up,
Our pathway soon grows pleasant. We shall reach—
Note well how truly were my lessons conn'd,—
A little swell of earth, which, on these plains,
Looks proudly like a hill. This, having pass'd,
The land sinks suddenly—the groves grow thick,
And, in the embrace of May, the giant wood
Puts on new glories. Shade from these will soothe
Thy overwearied spirit, and anon,
The broad blaze on the trunk of a dark pine
That strides out on the highway to our right,
Will guide us where, in woodland hollow, hides
A lonely fountain, such as those, of yore,
The ancient poets fabled as the home,
Each of its nymph ; a nymph of chastity,
Whose duty yet was love. A thousand times,
When I was near exhausted as yourself,
That gash upon the pine-tree strengthen'd me,
As showing where the waters might be found,
Otherwise voiceless. Thanks to the rude man—
Rude in the manners of his forest life,
But frank and generous,—whose benevolent heart—
Good kernel in rough outside,—counsels him,
As in the ages of the Patriarch,
To make provision for the stranger's need.
His axe, whose keen edge blazons on the tree,
Our pathway to the waters that refresh,

Was in that office consecrate, and made
Holler than knife, in hands of bearded priest,
That smote, in elder days, the innocent lamb,
In sacrifice to Heaven !

Now, as we glide,
The forest deepens round us. The bald tracts,
Sterile, and glittering with the profitless sands,
Depart ; and through the glimmering woods behold
A darker soil, that on its bosom bears
A nobler harvest. Venerable oaks,
Whose rings are the successive records, scored
By Time, of his dim centuries—pines that lift,
And wave their coronets of green aloft,
Highest to Heaven of all the aspiring wood,—
And cedars, that with slower worship rise,
Less proudly, but with better grace, and stand
More surely in their meekness ;—how they crowd,
As if 'twere at our coming, on the path !—
Not more majestic, not more beautiful,
The sacred shafts of Lebanon, though sung
By Princes, to the music of high harps,
Midway from Heaven ;—for these, as they, attest
His countenance who, to glory over all,
Adds grace in the highest, and above these groves
Hung brooding, when, beneath the creative word,
They freshen'd into green, and towering grew,

Memorials of his presence as his power !
—Alas ! the forward vision ! a few years
Will see these shafts o'erthrown. The profligate hands
Of avarice and of ignorance, will despoil
The woods of their old glories ; and the earth,
Uncherish'd, will grow barren, even as the fields,
Vast still, and beautiful once, and rich as these,
Which, in my own loved home, halt desolate,
Attest the locust rule,—the waste, the shame,
The barbarous cultivation—which still robs
The earth of its warm garment and denies
Fit succour which might recompense the store,
Whose inexhaustible bounty, fitly kept,
Was meant to fill the granaries of man,
Through all earth's countless ages.

How the sward
Thickens in matted green. Each tufted cone,
Gleams with its own blue jewel, dropt with white,
Whose delicate hues and tints significant,
Wake tenderness within the virgin's heart,
In love's own season. In each mystic cup
She reads sweet meaning, which commends the flow'r
Close to her tremulous breast. Nor seems it there,
Less lovely than upon its natural couch
Of emerald bright,—and still its tints denote
Love's generous spring-time, which like ardent youth,

Clouds never the dear aspect of its green,
With sickly doubts of what the autumn brings."

Boy as I was, and speaking still through books—
Not speaking from myself—I said—"Alas!
For this love's spring-time—quite unlike the woods,
It never knows but one; and, following close,
The long, long years of autumn, with her robes
Of yellow mourning, and her faded wreath
Of blighted flowers, that, taken from her heart,
She flings upon the grave heap where it rots!"

"Ah! fie!" was straightway the reply of him,
The old benevolent master, who had seen,
Through thousand media yet withheld from me,
The life I had but dream'd of—"this is false!—
Love has its thousand spring-times like the flow'rs,
If we are dutiful to our own hearts,
And nurse the truths of life and not its dreams.
But not in hours like this, with such a show
Around us, of earth's treasures, to despond,
To sink in weariness and to brood on death.
Oh! be no churl, in presence of the Queen
Of this most beautiful country, to withhold
Thy joy,—when all her court caparison'd,
Comes to her coronation in such suits
Of holiday glitter. It were sure a sin

In sight of Heaven, when now the humblest shrub,
By the maternal bounty is set forth,
As to a bridle, with a jewell'd pomp,
Of flow'rs in blue enamel—lustrous hues
Brightning upon their bosoms like sweet tints,
Caught from dissolving rainbows, as the sun
Rends with his ruddy shafts their violet robes—
When gay vines stretching o'er the streamlet's breast
Link the opposing pines and arch the space,
Between, with a bright canopy of charms,
Whose very least attraction wears a spell
Of life and fragrance!—when the pathway gleams,
As spread for march of Princess of the East,
With gems of living lustre—ravishing hues
Of purple, as if blood-dipp'd in the wounds
Of Hyacinthus,—him Apollo loved,
And slew though loving:—now, when over all
The viewless nymphs that tend upon the streams,
And watch the upward growth of April flow'rs,
Wave ever, with a hand that knows not stint,
Yet suffers no rebuke for profligate waste,
Their aromatic censers, 'till we breathe
With difficult delight;—not now to gloom:
With feeble cares and individual doubts,
Of cloud to-morrow. It were churlish here,
Ungracious in the sov'reign Beauty's sight,
Who rules this realm, the dove-ey'd sovran, Spring!—

This hour to sympathy—to free release
From toil, and sorrow, and doubt, and all the fears
That hang about the horizon of the heart,
Making it feel its sad mortality,
Even when most sweet its joy,—she hath decreed—
Let us obey her, though no citizens.

How grateful grows the shade—mix'd shade of trees,
And clouds, that drifting o'er the sun's red path,
Curtain his awful brows. Ascend yon hill,
And we behold the valley in whose breast
Flows the sweet brooklet. Yon emblazon'd pine
Marks the abrupt transition to the shade,
Where, welling from the bankside, it steals forth,
A voice without a form. Through grassy slopes,
It wanders on unseen, and seems no more
Than their own glitter; yet, behold it now,
Where, jetting through its green spout, it bounds forth,
Capricious, as if doubtful where to flow,—
A pale white streak—a glimmering, as it were,
Cast by some trembling moonbow thro' the woods!

Here let us rest. A shade like that of towers,
Wrought by the Moor in matchless arabesque,
Makes the fantastic ceiling,—leaves and stems,
Half-formed yet flowing tendrils, that shoot out,
Each wearing its own jewel,—that above

O'erhangs ; sustain'd by giants of the wood,
Erect and high, like warriors gray with years,
Who lift their massive shields of holiest green,
On fearless arms, that still defy the sun,
And foil his arrows. At our feet they fall,
Harmless and few, and of the fresh turf make,
A rich mosaic. Tremblingly, they creep,
Half-hidden only, to the blushing shoots
Of pinks, that never were abroad before,
And shrink from such warm instance. Here are flow'rs,
Pied, blue and white, with creepers that uplift
Their green heads, and survey the world around—
As modest merit, still ambitionless—
Only to crouch again ; yet each sustains
Some treasure, which, were earth less profligate,
Or rich, were never in such keeping left.
And here are daisies, violets that peep forth
When winds of March are blowing, and escape
Their censure in their fondness. Thousands more,—
Look where they spread around us—at our feet—
Nursed on the mossy trunks of massive trees,
Themselves that bear no flow'rs—and by the stream—
Too humble and too numerous to have names !

There is no sweeter spot along the path,
In all these western forests,—sweet for shade,
Or beauty, or reflection—sights and sounds—

All that can charm the wanderer, or o'ercome
His cares of travel. Here we may repose,
Subdued by gentlest murmurs of the noon,
Nor feel its heat, nor note the flight of hours,
That never linger here. How sweetly falls
The purring prattle of the stream above,
Where, roused by petty strife with vines and flow'rs,
It wakes with childish anger, nor forbears
Complaint, even when, beguiled by dear embrace,
It sinks to slumber in its bed below.
The red-bird's song now greets us from yon grove,
Where, starring all around with countless flow'rs,
Thick as the heavenly host, the dogwood glows,
Array'd in virgin white. There, 'mid the frowns
Of sombrous oaks, and where the cedar's glooms,
Tell of life's evening shades, unhidden shines
The maple's silver bough, that seems to flash
A sudden moonlight; while its wounded arms,
Stream with their own pure crimson, strangely bound
With yellow wreaths, flung o'er its summer hurts,
By the lascivious jessamine, that, in turn,
Capricious, creeps to the embrace of all.

The eye unpain'd with splendor—with unrest
That mocks the free rapidity of wings,
Just taught to know their uses and go forth,
Seeking range but no employment—has no quest

That Beauty leaves unsatisfied. The lull
Of drowsing sounds, from leaf, and stream, and tree
Persuades each sense, and to forgetfulness
Beguiles the impetuous thought. Upon the air
Sweetness hangs heavy, like the incense cloud
O'er the high altar, when cathedral rites
Are holiest, and our breathing for a while
Grows half suspended. Sullen, in the sky,
With legions thick, and banners broad unfurl'd,
The summer tempest broods. Below him wheels,
Like some fierce trooper of the charging host,
One fearless vulture. Earth beside us sleeps,
Having no terror; though an hour may bring
A thousand fiery bolts to break her rest.

How natural is the face of woods and vales,
Trees, and the unfailing waters, spite of years,
Time's changes and the havoc made by storm.
The change is all in man. Year after year,
I look for the old landmarks on my route,
And seldom look in vain. A darker moss
Coats the rough outside of the old gray rock;—
Some broad arm of the oak is wrench'd away;
By storm and thunder—through the hill side wears
A deeper furrow,—and the streams descend,
Sometimes, in wilder torrents than before—
But still they serve as guides o'er ancient paths,

For wearied wanderers. Still do they arise
In groups of grandeur, an old family,
These great magnificent trees, that, as I look,
Fill me with loftiest thoughts, such as one feels,
Beholding the broad wing of some strong bird,
Poised on its centre, motionless in air,
Yet sworn its master still. Not in our life,
Whose limit, still inferior, mocks our pride,
Reach they this glorious stature. At their feet,
Our young, grown aged like ourselves, may find
Their final couches, ere one vigorous shaft
Yields to the stroke of time. Beneath mine eyes,
All that makes beautiful this place of peace,
Wears the peculiar countenance which first
Won my delight and wonder as I came,
Then scarcely free from boyhood,—wild as he
'The savage Muscoghee, who, in that day
Was master of these plains. His hunting range
Grasp'd at the mountains of the Cherokee,
The Apalachian ridge—extended west
By Talladega's vallies—by the streams
Of 'Tallas-hatchie—through the silent woods
Of grey Emuckfau, and where, deep in shades,
Rise the clear brooks of Autossee that flow
To 'Tallapoosa ;—names of infamy
In Indian chronicle ! 'Twas here they fell,
'The numerous youth of Muscoghee,—the strong—

Patriarchs of many a tribe—dark seers renown'd,
As deeply read in savage mystery—
The Prophet Monohōee—priest as famed,
Among his tribe, as any that divined
In Askelon or Ashdod ;—stricken to the earth,
Body and spirit, in repeated strife,
With him, that iron soul'd old chief, who came
Spurring from Tennessee.

Below they stretch'd,
In sovran mastery o'er the wood and stream,
"Till the last waves of Choctawhatchie slept,
Subsiding in the gulf. Such was the realm,
They traversed, in that season of my youth,
When first beside this pleasant stream I sank,
In noontide slumber. What is now their realm,
And where are now their warriors ? Streams that once
Soothed their exhaustion, satisfied their thirst—
Woods that gave shelter—plains o'er which they sped
In mimic battle—battle fields whereon
Their bravest chieftains perish'd—trees that bore
The fruits they loved but rear'd not ;—these remain
But yield no answer for the numerous race,—
Gone with the summer breezes—with the leaves
Of perish'd autumn ;—with the cloud that frowns
This moment in the heavens, and, ere the night,
Borne forward in the grasp of chainless winds,
Is speeding on to ocean.

Wandering still—

That sterile and most melancholy life,—
They skirt the turbid streams of Arkansas,
And hunt the buffalo to the rocky steeps
Of Saladanha ; and, on lonely nooks,
Ridge-barrens, build their little huts of clay
As frail as their own fortunes. Dreams, perchance,
Restore the land they never more shall see ;
Or, in meet recompense, bestow them tracts,
More lovely—vast, unmeasured tracts, that lie
Beyond those peaks, that, in the northern heavens,
Rise blue and perilous now. There, rich reserves,
Console them in the future for the past ;
And, with a Christian trust, the Pagan dreams
His powerful Gods will recompense his faith,
By pleasures, in degree as exquisite
As the stern suffering he hath well endured.
His forest fancy, not untaught to soar,
Already, in his vision of midnight, sees
The fertile vallies ; on his sight arise
Herds of the shadowy deer ; and, from the copse,
Slow stealing, he beholds, with eager gaze,
The spirit-hunter gliding toward his prey,
In whose lithe form, and practised art, he views
Himself—a noble image of his youth
That never more shall fail !

We may not share
His rapture ; for if thus the might of change
Mocks the great nation, sweeps them from the soil
Which bore, but could not keep—what is't with us,
Who muse upon their fate? Darkly, ere while,
Thou spok'st of death and change, and I rebuk'd
The mood that scorn'd the present good—still fond
To brood above the past. Yet, in my heart,
Grave feelings rise to chide the undesert,
That knew not well to use the power I held,
In craving that to come. Have these short years,
Wrought thus disastrously upon my strength,
As on the savage? What have I done to build,
My better home of refuge; where the heart,
By virtue taught, by conscience made secure,
May safely find an altar, 'neath whose base
The tempest rocks in vain. The red-man's fate,
Belong'd to his performance. They who know,
How to destroy alone and not to raise,
Leaving a ruin for a monument,
Must perish as the brute. But I was taught,
The nobler lesson that, for man alone,
The maker gives the example of his power,
That he may build on him. What work of life—
The moral monument of the Christian's toil—
Stands, to maintain my memory after death,
Amongst the following footsteps? Coldly, the ear

Receives his question, who, with colder speech,
Makes his own answer. Unperforming still,
He yet hath felt the mighty change that moves,
Progressive, as the march of mournful hours,
Still hurrying to the tomb. 'Tis on his cheek,
No more the cheek of boyhood—in his eye,
That laughs not with its wonted merriment,
And in his secret heart. 'Tis over all
He sees and feels—in all that he hath loved,
And fain would love, and must remember still !
Those gray usurpers, Death and Change, have been
Familiar in his household, and he stands,
Of all that grew around his innocent hearth,
Alone—the last ! And this hath made him now
An exile,—better pleased with woods and streams,
Wild ocean, and the rocks that vex his waves,
Than, sitting in the city's porch, to hear
The hurry and the thoughtless hum of trade !

The charm is broken and the ' Traveller's Rest !'
The sun no longer beats with noonday heat
Above the pathway, and the evening bird,
Short wheeling through the air, on whirring wing,
Counsels our flight with his. Another draught—
And to these pleasant waters—to the groves
That shelter'd—to the gentle breeze that soothed,
Even as a breath from heaven ;—to all sweet sights,

Melodious sounds and murmurs, that arise
To cheer the sadden'd spirit at its need ;
Be thanks and blessing ;—gratitude o'er all,
To God in the Highest ! He it is who guides
The unerring footstep—prompts the wayward heart
To kindly office—shelters from the sun—
Withholds the storm,—and, with his leaves and flow'rs,
Sweet freshening streams and ministry of birds,
Sustains, and succors, and invigorates ;—
To Him the praise and homage—Him o'er all !



THE MOCK BIRD.

WHAT has winter left for thee,
That, within the ancient tree,
Thou dost linger, in thy gray,
Sober vestments, like some friar,
Haunting still the old abbaye,
Wasted by the strife and fire ?
Wherefore house thee thus alone,
When the other tribes have gone ?—
With them to the forest speed,
Leave to human heart the grief,
That in wo and dusky weed,

When winter twilight's cold and brief,
Walks sad with hooded thought, through perish'd wood and leaf

Sure, I know thee!—thou art he,
That, with reckless minstrelsy,
Late that sung—while all the grove,
By the spring-buds won to joy,
Bathed in fragrance, breathed of love—

Ditty of a wild annoy ;
Mocking all with scornful strain,
Till the passion grew to pain,
And each humbler warbler fled,
Silent, in his shame and fear,
Thou, the while, with wing outspread,
Sweetly voiced in spite of sneer,

Throned on the topmost bough, or darting wild through air.

Thou hast pleasures. I have seen,
When the buxom spring was green,
How thy nest was tended—how,
Thou didst gather straw and blade,
And, within the ancient bough,
Sit, the stem and leaf to braid.—
Patient was thy watch, and stern
Lesson might the viper learn,—
Crawling where thy young ones lie,
With his cruel, keen desire,—

From thy eagle-raging eye,
Showing all thy soul on fire,
While talon, beak and wing, declared the warrior's ire.

Patient, as thy young ones grow,
Use of feeble wings to show,
How, to glide from bough to bough,
How, with gradual flight, to bear,
Poised on spreading pinion now,
Through the yielding heart of air;
And, when free of wing, and high,
Winging, singing, through the sky,—
Then, with thy triumphant strain,
Matchless in unmeasured might,
As if born of madden'd brain,
Ecstasied with deep delight,
Whirling in voice aloft, in far, capricious flight.

Why the cynic temper?—why
Still that strain of mockery?
Art thou truer? Dost thou sneer,
As thou haply know'st that none
Of the love songs spring must hear,
Speaks fidelity but one?
Thou art constant—that I know—
To thy young ones,—to the foe,—
To thy mate, and to the tree,

That beside my window sill,
Many a year, has been to thee
Cottage, home and empire still,—
Thou wast the sovereign there, and ever hadst thy will.

Still maintain it—thou alone,
Of the birds, when summer's gone,
Keep'st thy dwelling, hold'st thy place,
As if in thy breast there grew
Something, which, to human race,
Kept thee dedicate and true.
Cynical thy song, but mine
Might be cynical like thine,
Could I deem with thee, that all
Of the vows in spring we hear,
Were forgotten by the fall;—
But I shrink from doubt so drear;—
I yield my heart to faith, and love when thou wouldst sneer.

AUTUMN 'TWILIGHT.

THERE is a soft haze hanging on yon hill,
Tinged with a purple light. How beautiful,
And yet, how cold ! 'Tis the first robe put on,
With gloomy foretaste of a gloomier hour,

By the sad autumn. Well may she repine,—
With heavy dread of winter at her heart,
Adverse to present sweetness as to hope,
Which never cheers her fortunes. She is doom'd—
Survivor of a race that left no heirs,
And she, the mourner of the beautiful,
Whose treasure, in the past to which she glides,
Was but a bright decay, a perishing bloom,
The bounty of a love, whose dearest gifts,
Best show in desolation. The sweet green,
The summer flush of love—the golden bloom
That came with flow'rs in April, and brought sweets,
Whose purity might teach a faith that life
Were also in their breathing—all are gone !
The green grows pallid—the warm, virgin flush,
That was in summer's eye, and on her cheek,
A glory all too precious for a dream,—
Too precious far for mortal certainty—
Fleets all—as keen, the breezes from the hills,
Sweep icily o'er the meadows. All the bright hues,
Graced by the flow'rs and hemispheric crowns,
Of trees grown haughty in a birthday dress,
Torn from the harboring forest, seek the sky,
Fading in sunset ; clinging to the last,
With fond regretful yearnings as they fly,
To homes they made most sacred, and now make
Most wretched, in the poverty of bloom,

They leave in token of the cherish'd lost.
Their last embrace, to sorrowful twilight given,
Fades faintly o'er the forest,—a sad flush
That melts into the distance. Then the winds,
Slow rising, as from mansions of the night,
With trailing robes of darkness, and broad arms,
Stretch'd out in action suited to the dirge,
That speaks the mournful ruin of their homes—
Wail heavily through the branches; while the leaves,
Saddest of mourners, flung on summer's grave,
Lament her in the silence of true grief.

Ah ! mock me not that thus I mourn with them;
The sad heart's wisdom is to weep enough !—
I hear your lesson, but of what avail,
Since, while it teaches worthlessness of grief,
It still acknowledges the pregnant cause
That, in the very uselessness of tears,
Compels our tears most freely. You discourse,
To feeling, with a counsel that prevents
All feeling; and, unless you stifle her,
You teach most idly. Never yet was grief
Fit moralist,—and that philosophy,
Which will not take its colour from the heart
It seeks to fortify against the cloud,
Reaches no sacred chord of sympathy,
Responsive with sweet echoes. All your laws

Teach sorrow when you teach her hopelessness.
To bid the sacred current cease to flow,
'Tis needful first you freeze it; and what gain,
To him with dear affections, o'er whose grave,
He still encourages dear memories,
That feeling should be made secure from hurt,
By gross and cold insensibility?
Foregoing nature, what do we acquire,
But forfeiture? As well persuade the flow'r,
To grow to stone, lest, rifled by the storm,
Its premature bloom shall perish. If unwise,
To yield to sorrow the sole sovereignty,
As little wise to substitute for this,
The apathy, that, still rejecting grief,
Grows ignorant of all rapture. You declaim—
With the grave studied eloquence of books,
Writ by cold monks in the ascetic cell,—
That life is full of changes.—Be it so!
These changes ever are from joy to wo,
And wo to joy again. To conquer one
Is scarce to know the other. In your calm,
'Tis easy to declare that things of life,
By the inevitable laws of things,
Are also things of death; but not the less,
Find we a sacred certainty of grief,
Even in this very knowledge. Death, you say,
Still harvests forms that love, not less than forms,

That simply live ; and folly 'tis to mourn,
That the dear life whose presence was a joy.
And fragrance, that forever brought us joy,
Is destined to as sure an apathy.
As the poor flow'rs we tread on.

Happy he,
Perchance—and yet I think not—who can thus
Prose calmly over nature, and the fate,
Of her dear offspring in whatever fields.
But mine is not this happiness ;—nor mine,
The thought that happiness may light her fire,
From such dry chips of doctrine. The rich sap,
May from the wounded tree gush forth in tears,
The green rind feel its hurts, and something lose
Of verdure in the injury it feels.
But teach the bough, how better were it lopt,
And flung into the fire, than suffering thus,
From the keen hurts of the too wanton axe !
The wound will heal. You point me to the scars ;
But while it still hath rind for newer hurts,
And fresh sap still to flow from other wounds,
The scars are but in proof of strength to bear,
As well as hurts to suffer. Tears, for me,
Bring sweet relief for what is lost or borne,
As teaching still of sensibilities,
For future feeling, whether joy or wo,
Or gain, or loss ;—and, in this consciousness,

One finds a better solace for the past,
Than in that cold philosophy which stills
The too susceptible pulse,—that, to the future,
Looks evermore with hope.

And still you chide,
That grief should waste upon inferior things,—
Leaves of the forest, flow'rs of the summer day,
Fruits of a season's tribute, and frail fancies
Born of the dew and sunshine, for the hour—
The sorrows that might find excuse, if given
For loss of human treasure—forms and greatness,
Which fill society with sense of virtue,
And still commend to love that fierce ambition,
That makes even love a sacrifice in turn !

Yet have I something of a plea beyond,
In the condition which has shut me out,
From much, that, in the common social life,
Commends itself unto humanity,
As only worth its care. Mine was a lot
Peculiar in its loneliness of aim,
If not distinction. Childhood found me first,
A sad bewildered orphan—one who stood
Alone among his fellows,—and when wrong'd,
Knew not the lap in which to hide his head,
Nor friendly ear in which to pour complaint.
I had no parents tendance. Never mine,

A sister's lips have hallow'd while they press'd;—
No brother called me his;—no natural ties
Embraced, and trained, and cherish'd, my wild youth,
Which still went erring into devious ways,
Sorrowing as much as sinning, in a mood,
That craved love only for its guide to goodness;—
And this alone it found not—or in vain!—
And thus, with strong affections still in exile,
Denied where they sought favor, I have turn'd,
To the inanimate, unspeaking creatures,
That grew about or wanton'd in my path—
Having no scorn or hatred in their hearts—
Having no voice of censure on their tongues—
For that most needed sympathy of nature,
Which answer'd not the love within my heart.
Thus were my footsteps won into the forest,
Thus did I seek these groves as if in worship,
With regular tendance, and a meek observance,
That suffer'd not the chaunt of winds, the sighing,
That seem'd most human, in the pine's great branches,—
The fall of leaf, the shadows of the thicket,
Or flutter of the gay bird o'er the pathway,—
To 'scape me;—moralizing at each motion,
Something, that as it touch'd my heart with feeling,
Was surely not philosophy. My rambles,
Still brought me what I sought;—and these pale flow'rs,
And the green leaves, now yellow, at our feet,

Were something more to me than leaves and flow'rs.
They were my kindred. Now, that they are gone,
I weep them, as a loss of family,
And tread among them with a cautious step,
A sad slow motion, and with trembling heart,
As I were reading, in some ancient church yard,
The names of dear ones precious to my childhood.



BALLAD.

Oh ! bury him quickly, and utter no word
Of the memory sadden'd by sorrow so long ;
But when the cold stranger shall say that he err'd,
Then tell the dark tale of his crueller wrong.
We may not approve, but when others condemn,
'Twere crime that defence of his heart to forbear,
And show that his faults were all prompted by them,—
They could goad him to danger, then fly from him there.

You saw him for many long days ere he fell,
In chains and in solitude, sad but serene ;
'Tis grateful to know that he battled it well,
While his spirit grew strong in the gloom of the scene.
They thought him all callous to feeling and shame,—

Ah ! little they knew him ;—the spirit he bore
 Once aimed at, and sighed for, as lofty a fame
 As shines on the pages of history's lore.

But pile the dank sod which no stone shall adorn,
 No hand ever freshen with shrub or with flow'r ;
 We bury him coldly—we leave him forlorn—
 And midnight was never more dark than this hour.
 It is but a year since all proudly he stood,
 Brave, bright, unassuming—the sought, the preferr'd—
 Upheld by the strong, and beloved by the good—
 Now—bury him quickly and utter no word !



HEADS OF THE POETS.

I.—CHAUCER.

——Chaucer's healthy Muse,
 Did wisely one sweet instrument to choose,
 The native reed ; which, tutor'd with rare skill,
 Brought other Muses* down to aid its trill !
 A cheerful song, that sometimes quaintly mask'd,
 The fancy, as the affections, sweetly task'd ;
 And won from England's proud and *foreign*† court,
 For native England's *tongue*, a sweet report—

* The Provençal—the Italian.

† The Norman.

And sympathy—till in due time it grew
A permanent voice that proved itself the true,
And rescued the brave language of the land,
From that* which helped to strength the invader's hand !
Thus, with great patriot service, making clear
The way to other virtues quite as dear
In English liberty—which could grow alone,
When English speech grew pleasant to be known ;
To spell the ears of princes, and to make
The peasant worthy for his poet's sake.

II.—SHAKSPEARE.

——'Twere hard to say,
Upon what instrument did Shakspeare play—
Still harder what he did not ! He had all
The orchestra at service, and could call
To use, still other implements, unknown,
Or only valued in his hands alone !
The Lyre, whose burning inspiration came
Still darting upward, sudden as the flame ;
The murmuring wind-harp, whose melodious sighs
Seem still from hopefulest heart of love to rise,
And gladden even while grieving ; the wild strain
That night-winds wake from reeds that breathe in pain,
Though breathing still in music ; and that voice,

Which most he did affect—whose happy choice
 Made sweet flute-accents for humanity
 Out of that living heart which cannot die—
 The Catholic, born of love, that still controls,
 While man is man, the tide in human souls.

—
 III.—THE SAME.

—His universal song
 Who sung by Avon, and, with purpose strong,
 Compelled a voice from native oracles,
 That still survive their altars by their spells—
 Guarding with might each avenue to fame,
 Where, trophied over all, glows Shakspeare's name !
 The mighty master-hand in his we trace—
 If erring often, never commonplace ;
 Forever frank and cheerful, even when wo
 Commands the tear to speak, the sigh to flow ;
 Sweet without weakness—without storming, strong,
 Jest not o'erstrained, nor argument too long ;
 Still true to reason, though intent on sport,
 His wit ne'er drives his wisdom out of court ;
 A brooklet now, a noble stream anon,
 Careering in the meadows and the sun ;
 A mighty ocean next, deep, far and wide,
 Earth, life and Heaven, all imaged in its tide !
 Oh ! when the master bends him to his art,
 How the mind follows, how vibrates the heart ;

The mighty grief o'ercomes us as we hear,
And the soul hurries, hungering, to the ear ;
The willing nature, yielding as he sings,
Unfolds her secret and bestows her wings,
Glad of that best interpreter, whose skill
Brings hosts to worship at her sacred hill !

IV.—SPENSER.

It was for Spenser, by his quaint device,
To spiritualize the passionate, and subdue
The wild, coarse temper of the British Muse,
By meet diversion from the absolute :
To lift the fancy, and where still the song
Proclaim'd a wild humanity, to sway
Soothingly soft, and, by fantastic wiles,
Persuade the passions to a milder clime !
His was the song of chivalry, and wrought
For like results upon society ;
Artful in high degree, with plan obscure,
That mystified to lure ; and, by its spells,
Making the heart forgetful of itself,
To follow out and trace its labyrinths,
In that forgetfulness made visible !
Such were the uses of his Muse ; to say
How proper and how exquisite his lay—
How quaintly rich his masking—with what art
He fashions fairy realms and paints their Queen,

How purely—with how delicate a skill—
It needs not, since his song is with us still !

—
V.—MILTON.

The master of a single instrument,
But that the Cathedral Organ, Milton sings
With drooping spheres about him and his eye
Fixed steadily upward, through its mortal cloud,
Seeing the glories of Eternity !
The sense of the invisible and the true
Still present to his soul ; and, in his song,
The consciousness of duration through all time,
Of work in each condition, and of hopes
Ineffable, that well sustain through life,
Encouraging through danger and in death,
Cheering, as with a promise rich in wings !
A godlike voice that, through cathedral towers,
Still rolls, prolong'd in echoes, whose deep tones
Seem born of thunder, that, subdued to music,
Soothe when they startle most ! A Prophet Bard,
With utterance equal to his mission of power,
And harmonies, that, not unworthy heaven,
Might well lift earth to equal worthiness.

—
VI.—BURNS.

—Thither at eve,
Where Burns still wanders with his violin song ;

A melancholy conqueror, in whose sway
 His own irregular soul grew dark and fell,
 Incapable to spell, with resolute will,
 The capricious genius that, o'er all beside,
 Held perfect mastery. 'Twas here he went,
 A man of pride and sorrows, weak yet strong,
 With still a song discoursing to the heart,
 The lowly human heart, of all its joys,—
 Buoyant and cheerful, yet with sadness too,
 Such sadness as still shows us love through tears.

VII.—SCOTT.

Not forgotten or denied,
 Scott's trumpet lay of chivalry and pride;
 Homeric in its rush, and, in its strife,
 With every impulse brimming o'er with life,
 Teeming with action, and the call to arms;—
 A robust Dame, his muse, with martial charms,
 To strive, when need demands it, or to love;—
 The Eagle quite as often as the Dove.

VIII.—BYRON.

—For Byron's home and fame,
 It needed manhood only! Had he known
 How sorrow should be borne, nor sunk in shame,
 For that his destiny decreed to moan—
 His muse had been triumphant over Time

As still she is o'er Passion ; still sublime—
 Having subdued her soul's infirmity
 To aliment ; and, with herself o'ercome,
 O'ercome the barriers of Eternity,
 And lived through all the ages ; with a sway
 Complete, and unembarrassed by the doom
 That makes of Nature's porcelain common clay !

IX—A GROUP.

—As one who had been brought
 By Fairy hands, and as a changeling left
 In human cradle—the sad substitute
 For a more smiling infant—Shelley sings
 Vague minstrelsies that speak a foreign birth,
 Among erratic tribes. Yet not in vain
 His moral, and the fancies in his flight
 Not without profit for another race !
 He left his spirit with his voice—a voice
 Solely spiritual—which will long suffice
 To wing the otherwise earthy of the time,
 And, with the subtler leaven of the soul,
 Inform the impetuous passions !

With him came,
 Antagonist, yet still with sympathy,
 Wordsworth, the Bard of the Contemplative—
 A voice of purest thought in sweetest music !
 —These, in themselves unlike, together link'd,

Appear in unison in after days,
 Making progressive still the mental births,
 That pass successively through rings of time,
 Each to a several conquest, most unlike
 That of its sire ; yet borrowing of its strength,
 Where needful, and endowing it with new,
 To meet the fresh necessities which still
 Haunt the free progress of each conquering race.

—Thus, Tennyson and Barrett, Browning and Horne,
 Blend their opposing faculties, and speak
 For that fresh nature, which, in daily things
 Beholds the immortal, and from common forms
 Extorts the Eternal still ! So Baily sings
 In Festus—so, upon a humbler rank,
 Testing the worth of social policies,
 As working through a single human will,
 The Muse of Taylor argues—Artevelde,
 Being the man who marks a popular growth,
 And notes the transit of a thought through time,
 Growing as still it speeds.

Exquisite

The ballads of Campbell, and the lays of Moore,
 Appealing to our tastes, our gentler moods,
 The play of the affections, or the thoughts
 That come with national pride ; and, as we pause
 In our own march, delight the sentiment !

But nothing they make for progress. They perfect
The language, and diversify its powers—
Please and beguile, and, for the forms of art,
Prove what they are, and may be. But they lift
None of our standards ; help us not in growth ;
Compel no prosecution of our search,
And leave us, where they found us—with our time !



SONNET TO THE PAST.

Thy presence hath been grateful—thou hast brought
Toil and privation, which have tutor'd me,
To strength and fit endurance ;—set me free
From vainest fancies,—and most kindly wrought
On the affections which had else run wild,
Untrained by meet denial of their thirst.
What though I held thee yesterday accurst,—
Believe me not the vain and erring child
Still to remember chastening by its pain,
More than its uses ;—True, that to my home
Thou hast brought grief, and often left it gloom ;—
But that I do not of thy deeds complain,
Is proof that they have done no bootless part—
Have hurt my house, perchance, but help'd my heart.

STANZAS.

Ah ! not that song, nor any song,
Thy music mocks the heart,
With memories cherish'd still too long,
That will not now depart ;
For me, o'er whom a blighted past,
Will still its withering trophies cast,
There is no heaven in art :—
The strain that cannot hope restore.
But makes me feel the lost the more.

I ask not music's power to show
What earth has once possess'd ;
Nor does it need that all should know
My heart has once been bless'd :
The tear thy song has made to start,
Betrays the secret of my heart,
The pang that will not rest ;
But wakes to instant strength and sting,
When memory spreads her dusky wing.

That night-bird, with its chaunt, still nigh,
A sad, mysterious tone,
Recalling, with its boding cry,
The ghosts of glories gone ;

Bends o'er me with each human strain,
Restores that *hour*, with all its pain,
 Dark hour, I could not shun ;
Brings back the full soul's trial then,
Which left me desolate 'mong'st men !

They tell me that thy song is sweet,
 And eyes that look delight,
Follow, with silent love, thy feet,
 And gladden in thy sight ;—
It needs not proof like this—thy strain,
That brings the perish'd back again,
 The musical, the bright,—
May well persuade me of thy grace,
In pure white soul, and angel face.

Enough—thou hast her charm divine,
 To kindle and to move ;
On others let thy beauties shine,
 In others waken love ;
Perchance—and it is sure my pray'r—
Life's joys alone, and not its care,
 Thy future fate may prove ;
Enough, resembling her, I see
Her virtues, not herself, in thee.

STANZAS.

WHEN life deserts this lowly sphere,
And earth receives the form it gave,
Can wildest hope expect a tear,
From Love or Friendship, on my grave?

The pangs of life, the dread of death,
It might repel, and sure would soothe,
To feel that, with the parting breath,
All is not lost to love and truth.—

And, with conviction sure to know,
That she who sits in silence nigh,
With tears too deep for overflow,
Will cherish long the grateful sigh ;—

Will long, with yearning soul, go back,
In fruitless quest, through vanish'd hours,
Wherever love has left its track,
Or duty wove its way in flowers :—

Still fond to trace the memories dear,
Of joys so precious to the soul,
That love forgets each living care,
In that which can no more control.

And with what soothing, through the range
Of future hours, their grief and glee,
To feel, that he, whom nought could change,
Still lives in changeless memory.

Still lives for friendship—for the heart,
That, with his own, in emulous strife,
By glory lured, in love with art,
Began the ambitious race of life.

To dream that one, with joyless eye,
Will seek him still thro' realms of gloom,
To baffled hopes accord the sigh,
And crown with precious tears the tomb;—

And from the herd's pursuing hate,
Will still, with generous warmth, defend,
Declare the ambition mock'd of fate,
How bold its aim, how pure its end !

Ah ! these are hopes that well may still
The vulture in the hour of pain ;
The dying heart with solace fill,
And soothe the fears they may not chain.

Were these but mine !—but ah ! the doubt,
Even now is struggling at my breast ;

I feel the deep desire, without
The assurance which should make it blest!—

Alas ! if, at the parting hour,
The eye that sees my sad decline,
Shall watch, unmov'd, life's fleeting power,
And coldly meet the glance of mine.

Shall turn with heedless haste away,
When o'er me sinks the heavy pall,
Nor shudder, when the oppressive clay
Is heard upon my lid, to fall :—

Shall seek the crowd, the festal board,
The revel and the rout, to hush
Those memories Love should fondly hoard,
With hopes that to the future rush,—

To ask of stars, and winds, and skies,
Of thoughts by day, of dreams by night,
If faith may yet secure the prize,
Still precious in affection's sight ;

If ties so dear to earth, may be
Acknowledged in that happier clime ;
And there, if eyes of love may see,
Once more, the things so dear to time !

Ah! take from me the fear, that all
The friends so dear, so cherish'd long,
Shall from their deep allegiance fall,
A precious, but a faithless, throng.

Let me not doubt that in the hearts,
To mine most dear, I still may see,
Ere yet the pulse from life departs,
Love's better life—fidelity!



FOREST REVERIE BY STARLIGHT.

THE night has settled down. A dewy hush
Hangs o'er the forest, save when fitful gusts
Vex the tall pines with murmurs. Spring is here,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
And voice of many minstrels. Balmy airs
Creep gently to my bosom, and beguile
Each feeling into freshness. I will forth,
And gaze upon the stars—the uncounted stars—
Holding high watch in Heaven—still high, still bright,
Though the storm gathers round the sacred hill,
And shakes the cottage roof-tree. There they shine,
In well-remember'd youth. They bear me back,
With strange persuasiveness, to the old time

And happy hours of boyhood. There's no change
In all their virgin glory. Clouds that roll,
And congregate in the azure deeps of heaven,
In wild debate and darkness, pass away,
Leaving them bright in the same beauty still,
Defying, in the progress of the years,
All change; and rising ever from the night,
In soft and dewy splendor as at first,
When, golden foot-prints of the Eternal steps,
They paved the walks of heaven, and grew to eyes
Beckoning the feet of man. Ah! would his eyes
Behold them, with meet yearning to pursue
The holy heights they counsel! Would his soul
Claim kindred with the happy forms that now,
Walk by their blessed guidance—walk in heaven,
In paths of the Good Shepherd! Then were earth
Deserving of their beauty. Then were man,
Already following, step by step, their points,
To the One Presence: at each onward step
Leaving new lights that cheer his brother on,
In a like progress. Happily they shine,
As in his hours of music and of youth,
When every breath of the fresh-coming breeze,
And every darting vision of the cloud,
Gleam of the day and glimmer of the night,
Brought to the craving spirit harmony,
And blessed each fond assurance of the hope

With sweetest confirmation. Still they shine,
And dear the story of their early prime—
And his—the conscious worshipper may read
In their enduring presence. Happiest tales
Of innocence and joy, events and hours,
That never more return. These they record,
Renew, and hallow, with their own pure rays,
When blight of age is on the frame—when grief
Weighs the vex'd heart to earth—when all beside,
The father, and the mother, and the friend,
Speaking in decaying syllables—dread proof
Of worse decay!—and that sad chronicler,
Feeble and failing in excess of years,
Old Memory, tottering from his mossy cell,
Stops with the imperfect legend on his lips,
And drowns into sleep. No change like this
Falls on their golden-eyed veracity—
Takes from the silvery truths that line their lips,
Or stales their lovely aspects. Well they know
The years they never feel; see, without dread,
The storm that rises and the bolt that falls—
The age that chills, the apathy that chokes,
The death that withers all that blooms below—
Yet smile they on as ever, sweetly bright,
Serene, in their security from all
The change that troubles man!

Yet, hill and tree

Change with the season—with the alter'd heart,
And weak and withering muscle. Ancient groves
That sheltered me in childhood, have given place
To gaudy gardens; and the solemn oaks,
That heard the first prayers of my youthful heart
For greatness, and a life beyond their own—
Lo! in their stead, a maiden's slender hand
Tutors green vines, and purple buds, and flow'rs,
As frail as her own fancies. At each step,
I miss some old companion of my walks,
Memorial of the happy hours of youth,
Whose presence had brought back a thousand joys,
And images, that took the shape of joys—
The loveliest masquers, and all innocent—
That vanish'd with the rest. I would recal,
But vainly, each lost presence; and the sigh
That mourns the dear memorials now no more,
Counsels desires that to the mortal eye
Commend no mortal images. The thought
Grasps vainly, right and left, whereon to hold,
And droops, as one grown hopeless of support,
That once, with native strength for every strife,
Scorn'd succour from without. The earth denies
Her bosom for repose—the shade is gone,
That offered grateful shelter to the eye;
And the dear aspects, which had each its birth,

Twinn'd with some proud affection,—they depart,
In mournful robes of shadow, that disguise
Each lineament of love.

Ah ! not with these,
The perishing things that suffer from decay,
Seek we the sweet memorials of our youth—
The youth that seem'd immortal—youth that bloom'd
With hues and hopes of heaven,—firing its heart
With aspirations for eternal life,
Perpetual triumphs, and the ambitious thirst
Still for new fields and empires of domain !
In tokens of the soul—that craving thirst
That earth supplies not—in the undying things,
That man can never change—that mock his fate,
With never changing sweet serenity,
Assured of a security that builds
Upon the stedfast rock, gainst which the storm,
Beats through successive ages, but to prove
How fast its bulwarks—how eternally,
Sunk in the innate principle of things,
It draws, as to the inevitable heart
Its growth from all the rest !—to these we turn,
For the memorials precious to our youth :—
That season when the Fancy is a God—
Hope a conviction—Love an instinct—Truth,
The generous friend that ever by our side,

Hath still the sweetest story for the ear,
And wins us on our way !

Ah ! stars,—though taught,
That ye too, in the inevitable doom,
Must perish like the rest—grow dim and fade,
Having no eyes of beauty for the eyes,
That look to ye in beauty—yet your light,
Brings back my boyhood's seasons. In my heart,
Stand up the old divinities anew.

I hear their well-known voices, see their eyes
Shining once more in mine, and straight forget
That I have wept their loss in many tears,
Mix'd with reproaches—bitter, sad regrets,
Self-chidings, and the memory of wrongs,
Endured, inflicted, suffer'd, and avenged !

As I behold ye now, ye bring me back
The treasures of my boyhood. All returns
That I had long forgotten. Scarce a scene
Of childish prank or merriment, but comes
With all the freshness of the infant time,
Back to my recollection. The old school,
The noisy rabble, the tumultuous cries—
The green, remember'd in the wintry day,
For the encounter of the flying ball—
The marble play, the hoop, the top, the kite,

And, when the ambition prompted higher games,
The battle-array and conflict—friends and foes
Mixed in the wild *melée*, with shouts of might
'Triumphant o'er the clamors of retreat!

These, in their regular seasons, with their deeds,
Their incidents of happiness or pain,
In the revival of old memories,
Your lovely lights restore: nor these alone!
The chroniclers of riper years ye grow,
And loftier thoughts and fancies; when my heart
First took ye for sweet counsellors, and loved
To wander in your evening lights, and dream
Of other eyes that watched ye from afar,
At the same hour—and other hearts that gushed
In a sweet yearning sympathy with mine!
And, as the years flew by—as I became
Warier, yet more devoted—fix'd and strong—
Growing in the affections and the thoughts
When growth had ceased in stature—then, when life,
Wing'd with impetuous passions, darted by,
And voices grew into a spell, that hung,
Through the dim hours of night, about the heart,
Making it tremble strangely;—when dark eyes
Were planets, having power upon our souls,
As fated, dimly, at nativity;—
And older men were monitors too dull

For passionate youth,—and all our oracles
Were still mysterious counsellors to love,
And faith, and confident trust for all who brought
The meet credential of a faith like ours,
Gushing with sweetest overflow, and fond,
Of its own tears and weaknesses—Ah ! then,
How precious was your language ! What dear strains
Of promise ye pour'd forth,—in sounds that made
The impatient soul leap upward into flight,
The skies stoop down and yield to every wish,
While earth, embraced by heaven, instinct with love,
And blessing, had forgot all fears of death !

The brightness of your age, in every change,
Mocks that which palsies man. Dim centuries
That saw your fresh beginnings with delight,
Are swallowed in the ocean-flood of years,
Or crowd with ruin the gray sands of Time,
Who still, with appetite and thirst unslaked—
Active but unappeased—voracious still,
Must swallow what remains. Sweet images,
Whose memories wake our song—whose forms abide—
The heart's ideal standards of delight—
Are gone to people those dim realms of shade,
Where rules the Past—that sovereign, single-eyed,
Whose back is on the sun !

Ah ! when all these—

The joys we have recorded, and the forms
Whose very names were blessings—forms of youth,
Of childhood, and the hours we know not twice,
Which won us first, and carried us away
To strange conceits of coming happiness,
But to be thought on as delusions all,
Yet such delusions as we still must love !—
When these have parted from us—when the sky
Hath lost the charm of its ethereal blue,
And the nights lose their freshness—and the trees
No longer have a welcome shade for love—
And the moon wanes into a paler bright,
And all the poetry that stirr'd the leaves,
And all the perfume that was on the flow'rs—
Music upon the winds—wings in the cloud—
The carpeted vallies wealth of green—the dew
That morning flings on the enamell'd moss—
The hill-side, the acclivity, the grove—
Sweeter that Solitude is sleeping there !—
Are gone, as the last hope of misery :—
When the last dream of a deluded life
Hath left us to awaken—not to see
The golden morning, but the leaden night,
When sight itself is weariness, and hope
No longer rifles from the barren path
One flow'r of promise !—when disease is nigh

And every bone is racking—and the thought
Is of dry, nauseous, ineffectual drugs,
Which we must painfully swallow—but in vain—
And not a hand is nigh to quench the thirst,
With one poor cup of water,—or our pray'r
Is answer'd with indifferent mood, that shows
The moderate service irksome—when the eye
Strains for the closing heavens, and the fair sky
Which it is losing,—and dread images,
Meetly successive, of the sable pall,
The melancholy carriage, and the clod,
Make us to shudder with a stifling fear;—
When we have bade adieu to earthly things,
Fought through that long last struggle, still the worst,
Wrestling with self,—and winning that best boon,
Of resignation to the sovereign will,
We may no longer baffle or delude,—
And offer'd up our prayer of penitence,
Doubtful of its acceptance, yet prepared,
As well as our condition will admit,
For the last change in an unhappy life!—
Oh! then, methinks 'twould still rejoice mine eyes,
Would they throw wide my casement, and permit,
A last fond gaze upon the placid sky,
And all the heavenly watchers which have seen,
My fair beginning, and my rising youth,
And my tall manhood. Oh! dear friend that hears't

This chaunt—thy office may be soon to ask,
How shall I soothe this suffering which I see?—
With what sweet service to the friend I love,
But have not power to save, prepare his couch,
And robe him for his rest? Think of this song,
And of thy own sweet thoughts and sympathies.
Give him to see the blessed skies—the Night—
Her azure garments seeded with great eyes,
That smile on him with love ;—and, at the hour,
Which brings thee to thy parting, it will glad,
Thy heart in that sad struggle to behold
Their sweet serene of eyes. 'Twill bear thee back,
With all the current of thy better thoughts,
To the pure practice of thy innocent years.—
Repentant, then, of errors, evil deeds,
Imaginations of darkness, thou wilt weep
Over thy recollections ; and thy tears,
The purest tribute of thy contrite heart,
Will be as a sweet prayer sent up to heaven!



INSCRIPTION FOR THERMOPYLÆ.

Stranger ! thou stand'st upon Thermopylæ !
The pass that led into the heart of Greece,
But gave no passage save through greater hearts :
They keep it still.—Their graves are at thy feet.

EVENING AT SEA.

DAY sinks in rosy vestments, that, afar,
Spread o'er the billows, as with guardian office,
To shelter his decline. Gorgeous in gold,
And purple, fall the curtains of the west,
In the same gracious duty;—his repose
Screening from vulgar gaze of those who late
Had flourish'd in his favor. Now they fleet,
Those clouds of glorious garniture and shade,
Changing their apt varieties of form
No less than hue and loveliness, to lines
That melt, even while they linger, in the embrace
Of the fast rising Night ; who, like a mother,
Takes all within her fold. A little while,
And darkness sways the ocean whose great waves
Grow sullen, as they murmur through the gloom,
Resentful of its shadows.—But anon,
Comes forth the maiden Moon,—her sickle bent
For service in these fields ; a glorious blade,
Of silver, that subdues them at a stroke,
Leaving the keen reflection of its edge
On every heaving hillock as she goes !
How rare the hush that follows ! Not a wave
Lifts its rebellious head ; but, lawn'd in light,
Subdues itself, most willing, to the embrace

Of that perfecting beauty which makes all
Her tribute objects precious, though obscure !
How sudden sinks the wind, that, but awhile,
Took a capricious play upon its vans,
And shook our streamers out. The heavenly things
Seem brooding o'er our path ; the great abyss,
Of deep and sky, flush'd with intelligent forms,
The herds of eyes, the numerous flocking stars,
Gazing in wonder on the serene march.



BALLAD.

By the brooklet, grove and meadow,
Where together once we stray'd,
Do I wander, fond as ever,
Haunting still each secret shade ;
And, that thus content I wander,
Where such precious joys were mine,
Do I know that thou art with me,
And my spirit walks with thine.

In the murmur of the brooklet,
Still, thy well-known voice I hear,
And the whisper in the tree top,
Tells me that thy form is near ;

Thou hast left me, at departing,
All that earth could never take,
And, still comforted, I wander,
Through these shadows for thy sake.

Were I guilty of a passion,
Which thy beauty could survive,
Still I feel thy gentle presence,
Must the earthly fancy thrive ;
And, discoursing with thy spirit,
Oh ! I feel that earth has nought,
To compensate the forgetting,
Of the sweetness thou hast taught.



THE MINIATURE.

THERE needs no painter's skill to trace
The lineaments of that dear face,
Or keep, for memory's future tears,
The charms that fade with fading years ;
Such token, too, as this, I fain
Would have thee feel as worse than vain,
Since not alone were these the charms,
Dear heart, that won me to thy arms.

Think'st thou that smile, though rich it be,
That eye so bright—those tresses free—
This little dimple, where the loves
Sit smiling sly in sunny groves—
That cheek so smooth, that neck so fair—
That nameless grace beyond compare—
Think'st thou that these, alone, may bind,
In faith so fond, so wild a mind ?

As soft a lip, perchance, as this
Had blest me oft with Fanny's kiss ;
And Rosa has an eye whose glow
Would make a starlight in the snow.
Not these ! not these ! but in thy breast
The lurking love that mine confess'd ;
'Twas not alone for charms in thee,
But that thy heart was full of me !

Take back these lines, whose language weak
But tells that painting cannot speak—
That while it makes some beauties glow,
But mourns for those it cannot show.—
A portrait drawn with dearer art,
Lies perfect, sweet one, in my heart,
And truthful still, when 'er I gaze,
Thy love, as well as look, betrays.

THE CAPTIVE.

I.

THE Captive crouch'd in his dungeon,
On the floor the sunbeam lay ;—
He crept the length of his fetter,
But the sunbeam flitted away ;
“ Ah ! thus, hath the cruel fortune,
Still mock'd me, “ the Captive said ;
“ She came with her sunshine smiling,
But ere I could clasp her, fled.

II.

The Captive slept in his dungeon,
And a vision of visions spell'd
The sense of his sleeping sorrow,
The fairest he ever beheld ;
A maid at the door stood smiling,
And she said—“ come hither to me ;”
From his wrist his fetters crumbled,
And his feet and his soul were free.

III.

But with dawn the maiden vanish'd,
And lo ! by the Captive, stood
The form of the savage headsman,
With his axe still dripping blood ;—

"Ah! now, indeed," said the Captive,
"The sense of the dream I see;
The maid was the angel of mercy,
And 'tis mercy that sets me free."

THE GRAPE-VINE SWING.

LITHE and long as the serpent train,
Springing and clinging from tree to tree,
Now darting upward, now down again,
With a twist and a twirl that are strange to see:
Never took serpent a deadlier hold,
Never the cougar a wilder spring,
Strangling the oak with the boa's fold,
Spanning the beech with the condor's wing.

Yet no foe that we fear to seek—
The boy leaps wild to thy rude embrace;
Thy bulging arms bear as soft a cheek
As ever on lover's breast found place:
On thy waving train is a playful hold.
Thou shalt never to lighter grasp persuade;
While a maiden sits in thy drooping fold,
And swings and sings in the noonday shade!

Oh ! giant strange of our southern woods,
I dream of thee still in the well known spot,
Though our vessel strains o'er the ocean floods,
And the northern forest beholds thee not ;
I think of thee still with a sweet regret,
As the cordage yields to my playful grasp—
Dost thou spring and cling in our woodlands yet ?
Does the maiden swing in thy giant clasp ?




ATTICA.

METHINKS that now we breathe a purer air,
And lovelier looks the prospect. The blue sky
Might well persuade us of a happier sphere
Than aught our northern countries may supply.—
Look for your history now !—Beneath our eye,
Lies Attica,—there, bounded by the sea,
There, by Eubœa ;—yet, how boundless she
In sole dominion ;—with a realm outspread
Wherever Genius breathes, or memory broods
O'er the past works of Genius !—In our woods
We felt her mighty aspects, which still shed
An atmosphere of empire far and near ;—
And, though o'erthrown the altars of her God,
From the vast ruins still, he sends his spells abroad.

HEART ESSENTIAL TO GENIUS.

WE are not always equal to our fate,
Nor true to our conditions. Doubt and fear
Beset the bravest in their high career,
At moments, when the soul, no more elate
With expectation, sinks beneath the time.
The masters have their weakness. "I would climb,"
Said Raleigh, gazing on the highest hill—
"But that I tremble with the fear to fall!"
Apt was the answer of the high-soul'd Queen,—
"If thy heart fail thee, never climb at all!"
The heart! if that be sound, confirms the rest,
Crowns genius with his lion will and mien,
And, from the conscious virtue in the breast,
To trembling nature gives both strength and will!



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